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Andrew Rothstein
Socialism v Thatcher

Doug Hoyle MP
Labour Party and Public Ownership

Maria Ivannikova
Making Soviet Laws

Bernard Dix, Bill Boaden and John Gollan
Unemployment Disaster

Ireland / J. Graham : Paul Robeson / H. Francis
'S.I' Bill / W. Pomeroy : Democracy / Ken Brett

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LABOUR MONTHLY

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SOCIALISM AGAINST THATCHERISM

'It may be we shall rise the last as Frenchmen rose the first,
Our wrath come after Russia's wrath and our wrath be the worst.
It may be we are meant to mark with our riot and our rest
God's scorn for all men governing. It may be beer is best.
But we are the people of England; and we have not spoken yet.
Smile at us, pay us, pass us. But do not quite forget.'
G. K. CHESTERTON, *The Secret People.*

February 12, 1976

Chesterton was a Roman Catholic, and one of those whom Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto* laughed at as 'feudal socialists'. But his words irresistibly come to mind when contemplating the latest electioneering swindle talk by Margaret Thatcher, true mouthpiece of the worst enemies of the British people—the big business interests whose spokesman is the Tory Party. Elsewhere in this number Ivor Montagu deals with the balderdash with which she attempted to justify her furious attack on the Soviet Union and on the movement for detente which reached a new high stage at Helsinki last year. One need add only two points to this. She said: 'The Russians have not cut back on their defence programme.' In fact, it has been cut twice in recent years, so that it has fallen both in actual expenditure (not in 'future programmes' like the Labour government's supposed cuts) and in proportion to the national income (from 6.2 per cent to under 5 per cent in five years). She said: 'The Russians put guns before butter.' In fact, their individual consumption of butter has gone up by leaps and bounds in every five-year period for 20 years—and of meat, and eggs, and sugar, and fish and vegetables, as the figures show: in spite of having to defend themselves against the war preparations of the international Thatchers, Schlesingers and their kidney.

What a Thatcher Government Would Mean

Her outburst was a warning of the adventurism in foreign affairs which the British people would have to expect from the re-appearance of a Tory government. But turn to her address to the Young Conservatives' Annual Conference at Scarborough on February 8. She told them that the Tories will restore the individual's 'freedom and opportunity'. Stripped of its electioneering claptrap, this means that they would denationalise what (few) industries have been taken over

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for the public good, promote the interests of the great trusts who have for years been swallowing up the small trader and small manufacturer anyway, and cut the social services still more in order to provide more 'opportunity' to the upper classes to grow richer by less taxation. She said that there must be 'a fundamental shift in our society' and a cut in the 'heaping of control upon control'. Shorn of its electioneering flapdoodle, this means that the Tories would return the control of government to the top bureaucratic officials—Tories at heart—as it used to be right up to the second world war (and the late R. H. Crossman found its strength even later), and deprive the trade unions and socialist-controlled local authorities of even a small right to participate in decisions affecting the mass of the working people. 'Freedom of choice is the most precious thing for mankind,' trumpeted Mrs Thatcher: a truly moving declaration, until you remember that, for the Tory Party, freedom of choice has always meant freedom for the patrons of the Ritz, the West End costly restaurants, luxury stores and fashion houses—and freedom for the working class to 'know its place' at a level far beneath the standard of life and comfort of the rich—not to speak of the freedom to send its children to over-crowded, under-staffed and under-equipped schools (including comprehensives) while the capitalist class can pay £1,500—£2,000 a year for its children's places at the boys' and girls' public schools which have totally different conditions. Back to the halcyon days of the thirties, is Margaret Thatcher's slogan for the Tory Party! Needless to say, her government would have no difficulty in working with 'responsible trade union leadership'—the kind which used to sign agreements over the heads of its membership and expel those who raised protests against them: which broke strikes (as in 1921 for example), repudiated pledges of international solidarity (as in 1926), sided with their 'own' governments against colonial revolt (as during the Labour governments of 1924 and 1931) and so forth.

Crusaders Against Marx

Only a few years ago, Harold Wilson had an unguarded sneer at those who would take guidance in politics from 'Highgate cemetery': in other words, from Marx. He has his very questionable reward now from Mrs Thatcher, who in the same speech informed the world that 'the nineteenth-century notions of Karl Marx cannot be anything but out of date in 1976.' Reg Prentice, too, joined in the attack on 'the class war dogmas of the 1920s', and that 'curious piece of antique furniture'—the National Executive Committee of his party—

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which had ventured to remind the public on several important issues that the class struggle over such questions, between private profit and workers' interests, still existed. Of course Mr Prentice has his supporters on this question in the Labour Party—if Mrs Thatcher needed to be reassured of this. A frequent exponent is Mr Bryan Magee, MP for Waltham Forest. In his latest contribution to the *Times* (February 9) he explained that one tradition in the labour movement comes from the French revolution and Rousseau, and leads to the 'sacrifice of the individual to the collective' (as, for example, trade unionists refusing to work with parasite 'nons'?). The other is the 'Anglo-Saxon notion of democracy', derived chiefly from John Locke (not nineteenth century there but seventeenth!): it is concerned centrally with protection of the individual—'his life, his liberty, his property, his pursuit of happiness' (an amalgam, for Mr Magee's edification, of the slogans of the eighteenth-century American Declaration of Independence and the equally eighteenth-century Jacobin Declaration of the Rights of Man!). Mr Magee demands that this tradition should come uppermost.

'Anglo-Saxon Democracy'

Not to recall any other uncomfortable precedents, it would be interesting to hear the verdicts of the Indians, Africans, Caribbeans, Arabs and other peoples who have endured the protection of right-wing Labour governments applying 'Anglo-Saxon democracy' under James Ramsay MacDonald in the thirties, Clement Attlee in the forties and fifties and their successors later. And since Mr Magee and his fellow-Prentices are so concerned with early Anglo-Saxon notions, pre-Marx and pre-Rousseau, let us remind him of the first great exponent of those notions, Thomas Hobbes, Locke's predecessor, who wrote in his *Leviathan* (chapter 19), in words singularly topical today:

> Nor are these provinces which are in subjection to a democracy or aristocracy of another commonwealth democratically or aristocratically governed, but monarchically. . . . For though where the people are governed by an assembly chosen by themselves out of their own number the government is called a democracy or aristocracy, yet when they are governed by an assembly not of their own choosing, it is a monarchy, not of 'one' man over another man, but of one people over another people.

And that is precisely what existed in India, until the revolts of its working class and its armed forces in 1944-45 forced a reluctant surrender of political (not economic) privilege by the Attlee government. It existed in Guyana and other colonies long afterwards. It

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exists today in Northern Ireland and Oman—and, so far as British right-wing Labour had its way, it existed in Vietnam until recently under the benevolent wing of another great champion of Anglo-Saxon tradition, the US. Who knows, it might under the patronage of the same senior partner have also existed today in Angola, but for the support given to the Angolan people by those nineteenth-century Marxists.

Does the Class Struggle Exist?

But let us get back to the antiquated nineteenth-century notions of the class struggle which so greatly disturb Mrs Thatcher and her right-wing Labour allies. Some illustrations of the direct clash of interests between the British working people—the vast majority—and the owners of monopoly capital can be found in several articles we print this month: those by Bernard Dix and John Gollan, Douglas Hoyle MP and Jimmy Graham of Belfast AUEW. Any issue of the daily newspapers provides ample additional evidence that the class problem inherent in capitalist society, far from being dead, is on the contrary sharper than ever. Why has the 'Chequers strategy' in the motor industry produced huge pay-outs to private capital (British and American) and the beginnings of mass dismissals for the workers? Because right-wing Labour believes in a profitable private capitalist sector of industry, come what may. Why is a huge sector of the air routes from Britain across the Atlantic being reserved for a privately owned airline set up by the Tories directly against the interests of the nationalised lines? Because profits for capitalist enterprise must be promoted. Why is so-called defence expenditure being maintained at its vast and unnecessary levels, in defiance of Labour Party Conference decisions and election pledges? Because the 'merchants of death' arms firms who back the Tory howl about the Soviet menace would lose their profits, while public ownership of their works would enable a switch to peaceful production of publicly-owned goods much needed by the people. Why are the price controls announced on February 11 by Shirley Williams such a quarter-hearted, uncertain and sorry affair? Because the profits of the great monopolies must not be unduly threatened—notably those which are enshrined in the authority of the Common Market, in which the British government has no control, only the right to a timid bleat.

Principles of British Socialists

And look a little more closely at those notions which Marx and Engels, true, formulated so clearly between 1845 and 1895—but not only they, then and thereafter. Who wrote the following?

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> Practical socialism is a kind of national scheme of co-operation, managed by the state. Its programme consists essentially of one demand, that the land and other instruments of production shall be the common property of the people, and shall be used and governed by the people for the people.

A Marxist? No, Robert Blatchford in his *Merrie England* (1893). Who wrote, in those years when he was preaching socialism, this?

> We'll drive the robbers from our lands, our meadows and our hills:
> We'll drive them from our warehouses, our workshops and our mills:
> We'll make them fare upon their bonds, their bankbooks and their bills.

A Marxist? No, very far from it, J. Bruce Glasier in *Marching on to Liberty*, in the late nineties. Who wrote, in a little summary book of popular explanation, this?

> The essential principle of socialism: in one form or another public must be substituted for private ownership and control of land and capital.

A Marxist? No, one who fought the Marxist Social-Democrats all his political life, J. Keir Hardie MP, in *From Serfdom to Socialism* (1907). Who wrote, in a book which became a famous text for Labour, this?

> That is socialism: the nationalisation of the land and of the means of producing and distributing wealth: and the organisation of industry as a civic service under public ownership and control for the benefit of all, instead of as now under private ownership and control for private profit.

A Marxist? No, Fred Henderson in *The Case for Socialism* (1911). Who wrote, in 1918 when the world was shaken to its foundations by the great rebellion against capitalism in Russia, that Labour's aim was:

> To secure for the producers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry, and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible, upon the basis of common ownership of the means of production.

A Marxist? No, two who specialised in opposing and ridiculing Marxism until nearly the end of the lives—Sidney and Beatrice Webb, in *Labour and the New Social Order*, adopted as the Labour Party's constitution at a special conference on February 26, 1918 (and still in force). And who, after long years and five Labour governments had shown that departure from these principles had in practice strengthened the hold of capitalism and worsened the conditions of the working class and working people generally, wrote the following?

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> There are many strands of socialist analysis and belief which throughout the history of our movement have made the theme of the public ownership of our national industrial resources central to the achievement of a socialist society. . . . Only direct control through ownership of a substantial and vital sector of the growth industries, mainly in manufacturing which hold the key to investment performance, will allow a Labour government of the future to achieve its essential planning objectives in the national interest.

A bunch of Marxists? No, the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party, or its majority in 1973, which thus reverted to the programmes declared by socialist pioneers 80 years ago. These quotations have not been an historical exercise. They are a reminder that the basic principles denounced as 'Marxist'—and undoubtedly those principles coincide with the teachings of Marx and Engels and their followers for nearly a century in all lands—are at least as 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'up-to-date' as the electioneering propaganda of the Tories and Labour-Tories. If there is one lesson to be learned from the experience of six Labour governments, it is that, if there is one basis for left unity in 1976, it is the practical and urgent necessity of applying the basic principles of socialism—which are Marxist. Marxism persists because it is true.

Afterword

When R. Palme Dutt, after conducting this journal for over half a century, died suddenly in December 1974, fellow members of the Editorial Board thought it appropriate that the undersigned, who had taken part in the discussions at the founding of *Labour Monthly* in 1921, and from 1939 had served on its Board, should take over editorial duties for the time being. The statement of policy printed in our immediately following issue (February 1975)—that the journal must continue to be 'a champion of left unity, national and international'—reflected the spirit in which that decision was taken. It has been my constant guide. But from the beginning I made it clear that this must be only a temporary arrangement, since it was quite out of the question that someone barely 18 months younger than RPD was when he died should be his long-term successor. This was accepted, and among my duties as Acting Editor has been to look round for someone much younger who could become the Editor as soon as possible. This problem has now been solved; and I have more than usual pleasure in handing over my responsibilities with every confidence to Pat Sloan, well known for many years in the working class movement at home and abroad.

Andrew Rothstein

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UNEMPLOYMENT DISASTER

(1)

Bernard Dix
Assistant General Secretary
National Union of Public Employees

LAST summer, when the government mounted an intensive political campaign within the labour movement to win support for a policy of wage restraint, trade unionists were repeatedly told that if inflation was to be controlled there were only two alternatives to a strict limit on pay increases: unemployment, and cuts in spending on public and social services.

In their White Paper, *The Attack on Inflation*, the government reassured trade unionists that they were 'committed to bringing the rate of unemployment down.' But they explained that their ability to achieve this objective had been hampered by the excessive rate of inflation. Their solution to unemployment was, therefore, through a limitation of wages which would halt the rate of inflation.

The explanation was underlined with a further cautionary note. Failure to control inflation, said the White Paper, would mean 'massive and indiscriminative cuts in public expenditure'.

When the issues were debated at the annual TUC and the Labour Party Conference, the majority of trade unions, faced with these apparently grim policy options, raised their voting cards in support of the government's proposals. Many did so with extreme reluctance, and they qualified their support for the government by emphasising that it was conditional on speedy and visible evidence of falling unemployment and safeguards for the social and public services.

Now, more than half a year further on, the government are preparing for a new round of discussions with the unions on what they hope will be the next stage of a continuing policy of wage restraint. This time, however, government ministers can expect to have a much harder time in securing the backing of trade unionists, because we are now in a position to evaluate the government's recent record in practical terms and to expose the policy weaknesses which we could only project in largely theoretical terms last summer.

In particular, the continued existence of a rising level of unemployment and an ever-extending area of cuts in public expenditure will prove a source of acute embarrassment to the government. Only a few months ago they were arguing that these were alternatives to wage restraint, not a complement to it. The fact is—and a number of unions said so last year—that, given the government's obsessive

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belief that wage restraint is the principal solution to Britain's economic problems, it is inevitable that these three factors should operate at one and the same time.

The operation of the £6 pay limit has caused a drop in real living standards. After deductions for increased income tax and national insurance contributions, most workers who received the £6 have found only an extra £3.57 in their take-home pay. This, coupled with the effects of a 22 per cent rise in prices last year, has produced a drop in retail sales in the shops.

An added aggravation has been the effects of the £1,200 million increase in taxes in Denis Healey's April 1975 budget, and the impact on Britain of the recession in world trade.

The result? Falling demand, cut-backs in production and a consequent rise in unemployment.

Confronted with this situation, and under pressure from a vociferous right-wing press, the government have responded by squeezing public expenditure. Not as a short-term expedient, but as an initial stage in a long-term strategy which will divert a greater proportion of the nation's resources away from the public sector and into the private sector. This significant departure from socialist norms has been made in the belief that increased investment in private manufacturing will lead to greater profits which will in turn attract yet more investment, and so boost industrial activity leading to a fall in unemployment.

No one questions the need for greater investment in manufacturing industry as an essential ingredient to the solution of Britain's economic problems. What must be challenged, however, is a philosophy which argues that this can be achieved with little or no public control and at the expense of living standards and social objectives.

It is characteristic of the contortionist policies which the contradictions of capitalism generate in parts of the labour movement that, while capitulating to right-wing pressures to reduce public expenditure, the policy at present being pursued by the government is adding to public expenditure in a non-productive fashion.

Unemployment at the current level adds excessively to the size of the public sector deficit. Unemployed workers pay no income tax or national insurance contributions, nor do their employers pay a share of national insurance contributions. And, because the spending power of the unemployed is reduced, they pay fewer indirect taxes—such as VAT. All of this means a loss of revenue to the government. But at the same time unemployed workers receive state benefits, income

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tax rebates and a whole range of means-tested benefits, which means the government has to find extra cash to pay for the very unemployment which is already reducing government income. It has been estimated by Anthony Harris, economic correspondent of the *Financial Times*, that a reduction of half a million in the number of unemployed would reduce the public sector deficit by between £2,000 and £2,500 million.

This is not an argument that the unemployed are treated over generously. But it is an argument that the government are cutting back public spending on health, education and welfare in order to meet the cost of unemployment which the inadequacies of government policies have created. Only capitalism could construct such an elaborate parody of its own internal contradictions.

The challenge facing the government is to construct a policy through which rising standards of living generate economic growth and reduce the public sector deficit by curbing unemployment. It is this challenge that the trade unions must carry to the government in the coming months.

(2)

Bill Boaden
Education Secretary
National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education

THE present problem of the young unemployed and the high proportion of recent school leavers unable to find their first job should not have surprised the government. There have been sufficient warnings in the past few years to ensure that a government with real interest in the welfare of all its young people beyond statutory school leaving age would have been preparing for the circumstances of summer 1975. The absence of a real policy and the inadequate measures introduced are totally at variance with ministerial statements of concern for the disadvantaged 16-19 year-olds.

The serious unemployment of 1971-72 revealed the growing problems of finding jobs for the unqualified and untrained young people who still form too large a proportion of the youth population. In February 1972 the now defunct National Youth Employment Council set up a working party 'to investigate trends in opportunities below craft level for young people and to make recommendations.' The working party reported in March 1974, and its recommendations were sent to the Secretary of State at the Department of Employment. Later in the year the report was published as *Unqualified, Untrained and Unemployed* (HMSO, 86p).

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The working party made a series of recommendations, few of which have been implemented other than as part of recent emergency measures. The government has not yet replaced the National Youth Employment Council, which was wound up as a result of the Employment Act of 1973, with any similarly representative body. Yet the past nine months have seen the worst employment situation since the second world war for young people, and a series of unco-ordinated, 'panic' measures to reduce the number of school leavers on the unemployment register.

Before examining the measures so far introduced it would be useful to note that opportunities for day release for further education for young workers have steadily declined in recent years, and that the present government's educational spokesmen have repeatedly expressed their concern to do something for the most disadvantaged, in educational terms, of our 16-19 year-olds.

The figures for day or block release from employment of young workers under the age of 18 were 171,000 boys and 48,000 girls in 1971, 163,000 boys and 46,000 girls in 1972, and 153,000 boys and 39,000 girls in 1973, the latest available year. Each of these three years shows approximately 35 per cent of the employed boys in the age group and under 10 per cent of the employed girls obtaining release, compared with nearly 40 per cent of the boys and 10½ per cent of the girls in 1969. This decline has taken place in spite of pressure from the TUC and the Association of Teachers in Technical Institutions for the introduction of compulsory day release and for measures in the short term to produce improvements. So far, no real progress has been made, and there is little evidence in current government thinking of any real effort to produce a change.

The measures introduced by the government in the past year are a series of proposals of varying impact and short-term significance. What the measures have done is to reduce the numbers of young people on the register and to offer some prospect of useful employment for some. That in itself is welcome, in that it removes from young people the demoralisation produced by being either apparently unwanted or easily rejected after only a short period in employment. But it falls far short of meeting the real needs or of solving the problems of thousands of would-be workers.

The school leaver problem is highlighted each month by the unemployment statistics, and those figures, which showed 41,000 still seeking their first job in January, are still unacceptably high. The construction of the Department of Employment tables hides the problem of teenagers who have had at least one job and who are now

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unemployed. Many in this age group have had a number of jobs of short duration with spells of unemployment, others have had few jobs, some comparatively lengthy. At the end of last year they were variously estimated at between 175,000 and 200,000. This is a large proportion of those on the register and also a large proportion of the age group available for work.

Among the measures introduced as a result of government initiatives are the following: (1) training award schemes, a repeat of the initiatives undertaken by Industry Training Boards in the early 1970s with a considerable degree of success, (2) expansion of 'Community Industry', which had as its prime purpose the preparation for stable employment of those who had found it difficult to settle to a normal work routine, (3) 'Job Creation', which involves the proposals for short-term schemes which are socially useful and will involve particularly young people in worth-while employment for which the rate for the job will be paid, (4) an employment subsidy which will encourage employers to retain workers who might otherwise be made redundant, and (5) a recruitment subsidy which pays a premium to employers for additions to the pay roll, particularly of young workers.

Of the above-named schemes only the Training Award Scheme has a satisfactory element of vocational preparation involving opportunities for further education, although attempts may be made in some of the other schemes to introduce such an element. Whilst recognising the value of all the measures in terms of the young people who have been given worth-while occupation, the need is for some more satisfactory long-term planning for all the young people concerned.

Among additional measures which have been introduced are the schemes to assist up to 2,500 redundant apprentices to continue their training with other employers and a similar number of training scholarships for college-based sandwich course students. The Construction Industry Training Board has also provided supplementary grants to employers in the construction industry who are prepared to employ additional young workers as trainees.

If the government is serious in its declared intentions to reduce unemployment and to offer genuine opportunities to the disadvantaged in the 16-19 age group, it must introduce effective measures. A declaration that the day release provision for young workers included in the 1944 Education Act would be implemented would improve employment opportunities for many. A requirement that all Treasury-sponsored schemes for young workers had a day release

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requirement would have a similar effect. At the same time the decline in provision of resources for the careers advisory service and the further education service must be halted.

The present problem of unemployment amongst young people is not of short term duration and this must be acknowledged by government if effective measures are to be taken quickly. Without such measures the future for many of our young people is grim.

(3) John Gollan*

IN its economic statement on Healey's £6 policy, the Communist Party said that it was 'a savage attack on real wages and will mean the worst reduction in living standards for years,' and that 'only massive unemployment will result, deepening even further the growing economic recession in Britain.' This prediction has proved correct. Real living standards have been slashed by larger amounts than for 20 years; unemployment reached 1,430,000 in January, and the Prime Minister admits that it will go higher still.

The crisis of the capitalist economy is world wide. The Common Market economic report recorded an average 11.5 per cent drop in industrial production in a year, which was a reversion, in most member states, to 1972 levels. This is in sharp contrast to the socialist world. In 1971-75 Soviet industrial production was up 45 per cent, real wages up 20 per cent, and there is no unemployment.

Capitalist economic crisis has two sides—the cyclical crisis and the general crisis, that is, the system in its historical decay. Besides fighting the results of the crisis, it is important to establish its cause.

The capitalist mode of production is not production for use, but for profit. It is a system of exploitation. This is its fundamental contradiction. Pursuing maximum private profit, its aim is to keep wages, and therefore consumption, down. It uses this profit, apart from capitalist personal consumption, for reinvestment and increased production: that is the process of capitalist accumulation.

Production starts to outstrip total consumption; relative over-production occurs. At this stage production is cut back, unemployment grows, consumption and investment drop, the slump phase of the cycle takes place. A stage is reached when production falls below the falling consumption. Then the up-turn takes place: reinvestment starts, consumption increases as unemployment falls, but production increases still more. This, the boom phase, is but the prelude therefore

* John Gollan was, until his retirement, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Great Britain.

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to another slump. The contradiction between production, which is social, and private appropriation of profit, the characteristic of capitalism, is the ultimate cause of crisis.

Successive booms and slumps mark the history of capitalism. Production grows, but in a series of cycles. The worst cyclical crisis was 1929-31. The present is the worst since then, and the hoped-for revival is taking much longer than the optimists expected. It is clear that anything that cuts falling consumption still further, such as the £6 policy, worsens the slump as long as exports cannot increase in the recession.

The tendency to a long-term increase in unemployment is inherent in the system. For example, it is calculated that in the US the process of technical innovations increases production by 5 per cent a year. But the normal US growth rate (excluding slumps) is 2 to 3 per cent a year. The inherent problem here is obvious.

Peter Jay argues in the *Times* (January 29, 1976) that the real question about unemployment is not why it is cyclically high, 'but why it tends to reach a higher peak in each succeeding cycle. . . .' Full employment has dropped out of the vocabulary of the Labour government. Nowadays the cycle of booms and slumps takes place on the background of the general crisis of capitalism. What does this mean?

Marx analysed capitalism in its pre-imperialist stage. Lenin developed the critique of capitalism further in his *Imperialism*. He listed imperialism's five main economic characteristics: the creation of monopolies; the merging of banking and industrial capital; the export of capital assumes exceptional importance compared with the export of goods; international monopolies divide the world amongst themselves; the imperialist states divide the whole world into colonies. He argued from this: any new redivision of the world between the imperialists could only take place by war. Uneven development of capitalism was a law: first one capitalist power then another would dominate. Colonial conquest would lead to colonial revolt and national liberation. Class struggle would sharpen as the working class sought a new way out of capitalism's deepening social contradictions. Imperialism, he concluded, is the 'eve of the proletarian social revolution'.

Again Marxist analysis has proved correct. We are in the historical phase of the general crisis of the capitalist system.

The unexpected outcome of the first world war (for the capitalists) was the Russian revolution, and of the second, the East European socialist states, the Chinese revolution, Korea, Vietnam and, later,

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Cuba. We now have two world social systems, the shrunken capitalist world and the developing socialist world, where growth rates exceed those of the United States, the strongest capitalist power.

Second, the world colonial system has collapsed under the blows of the national liberation movement, supported by the socialist world and the international working class.

Third, all the social and political contradictions of the shrunken capitalist world deepen, and the working class struggle becomes more acute. The net result is a decisive tilt in the balance of world forces to socialism, national liberation and the working class movement.

It would be the height of folly to underestimate imperialism's strength. In general, however, it increasingly loses its capacity to 'roll back' socialism and national liberation. A third world war can be prevented. Detente is growing, although it has to be vigorously fought for, as the current anti-Soviet and rearmament campaign shows.

This profound historical process has far-reaching repercussions for the capitalist world. Monopoly capitalism has become state monopoly capitalism: amongst other things even the biggest monopolies cannot function without huge injections of state funds (the National Enterprise Board, Leyland and Chryslers). Inter-imperialist contradictions grow (US, Japan, EEC), with subsequent trade war. The world monetary system has broken down; the era of cheap raw materials has ended; inflation and mass unemployment exist side by side.

In Britain the position is worst of all. Historically the first imperialism, Britain is slipping back in the capitalist world, becoming increasingly parasitic. For years she has had the lowest growth rate and lowest investment rate per worker of the major countries. There is a vicious spiral: relative decline, yet big British investment abroad at the expense of home industry. The pound is the weakest major currency. Interest rates are higher, inflation is higher. Healey's doctrine is to wait for economic revival in the stronger capitalist economies, refusing in the meantime to take any meaningful steps to expand the economy at home. In face of all this, the traditional capitalist approach of the government's economic strategy is not only positively harmful, but completely bankrupt.

Our movement is correct to fight for urgent crisis measures to tackle unemployment now, including the abandonment of the fatal £6 policy, and resistance to redundancies. Struggle alone will decide the outcome. But in addition, as the crisis programme of the left and the Communist Party increasingly indicates, far-reaching inroads

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have to be made into monopoly capitalism and its imperialist basis if there is to be any real advance. These must include large-scale nationalisation of a new type and an onslaught on wealth, steps which go far beyond the traditional 'reflation of the economy' measures, important though these are.

But in the end the solution can only be socialism. Socialism overcomes the contradictions of capitalism. Long ago, Marx argued theoretically in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* the principles of the socialist economy. No exploitation or private profit; social production is planned and the relative broad ends—expanding production, steadily rising consumption, both personal and social—are brought into harmony. In other words, production for use, not for private profit.

This was the theory. The progress of the socialist countries shows the successful application of the theory. Not that there are no problems: there are many. But they are not those of capitalist crisis with its fundamental contradictions.

LABOUR PARTY AND NATIONALISATION

Doug Hoyle MP

THE differences between the left and the right wings of the Labour Party have always been most apparent in their attitudes to nationalisation. The left have argued that, without an extension of public ownership which redresses the wealth within the nation, we shall never be able to change from a capitalist to a socialist society. On the other hand, whilst the right wing will support nationalisation for specific or, in their view, necessary purposes, they believe in a mixed economy dominated by the private sector.

The differences between the two wings became obvious with the Attlee government between 1945 and 1951, when, having nationalised the basic supply industries, coal, gas, electricity, railways and airlines, the Party was divided when it came to taking the steel industry into public ownership. When the battle was finally won it was so late in the life of the Labour government that the Tories were able to denationalise it when they took over the reins of power after the 1951 election.

The arguments within the Labour Party continued throughout the 1950s. During this time Labour revisionist economists tried to show that nationalisation was irrelevant and unnecessary. They claimed

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that all that was needed was an expanding economy run on Keynesian lines. Any extremes of wealth could be taken care of by taxation and an expansion of the social services. Also, they claimed that, due to Tory attacks on nationalised industries, any Labour plans for an extension of the public sector would lose votes. These arguments reached a zenith in 1959 when Hugh Gaitskell, then leader of the Labour Party, tried to eliminate clause 4 from the Labour Party constitution. The Party rebelled against these proposals, and Gaitskell was forced to drop them. The sterile argument finally came to an end with the election of Harold Wilson as leader, following the death of Gaitskell.

However, the Wilson government of 1964-70 did not take any great strides in extending public ownership. Steel was renationalised and there was an attempt to evolve a national plan, under George Brown, which was farcical. It involved asking each major company for their future investment plans, collating these and then presenting them as a national plan. It certainly revealed the impossibility of planning without having control of the major companies in the country.

It was becoming increasingly apparent, during the later years of the Labour government's period of office and during the time of the Heath government between 1970 and 1974, that the economies of Western Europe and the US were no longer responding to Keynesian economics. Unemployment was rising, the period of booms was getting shorter whilst that of slumps was getting longer. It is a trend which is still continuing.

It meant that Labour had to review its economic policy in relation to the changing conditions. It was against this background that the Labour Party considered the document, *Labour's Programme for Britain*, at the 1973 Conference. This stated Labour's belief that industries which are vital to the economic well-being of the nation should be controlled by, and run in the interests of, the country as a whole. It set out three criteria to justify public ownership: one, that it eliminated the opportunity for profiteering; secondly, that it confronted the Party with new challenges to develop democratic control; and thirdly, central to the whole debate, that it distributed capital gains throughout the nation instead of their being used to make the rich richer.

It admitted that in the past, because of the economic needs of the country, industries had been taken into public ownership which were unprofitable, such as coal, gas, railways and airlines. It explained that, because of social needs, unprofitable bus services and railway

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lines had been maintained, airlines told to buy British planes against their commercial judgement, and uneconomic pits kept open. I am sure that miners would challenge the last remark in view of the large number of closures which took place under Robens.

The *Programme* called for industrial democracy in the nationalised industries, with freedom for them to extend their activities into manufacturing areas, and for an integrated fuel policy. The document promised the return to the nationalised industries of companies and airline routes hived off by the Tories, an extension of public ownership into ports, shipbuilding and aircraft manufacturing, and promised an element of public ownership in the pharmaceutical industry. It also drew attention to the study group examining financial institutions and the vast power they exercised without public control or accountability. It pointed out that a previous Conference resolution had given a high priority to public ownership and control of finance.

However, the most specific and interesting proposal for an extension of public ownership was the suggestion that a state holding company be established, on the lines of the Italian IRI, which would take firms into the public sector. It would either purchase these outright or acquire substantial shareholdings in companies operating in key sectors of the economy. It would also be used as a means of taking new industries to the regions.

These proposals on public ownership and the setting up of the National Enterprise Board were contained in Labour's election manifesto of February 1974. In addition it spelt out sectors where a public holding was essential to control prices, stimulate investment, encourage exports, create employment, protect workers and consumers from the activities of irresponsible multinationals, and to plan the economy in the national interest. The manifesto also named certain industries as falling into the category of key sectors for the attentions of the NEB. These included pharmaceuticals, road haulage, construction, machine tools, and envisaged the setting up of a state holding company to control North Sea and Celtic Sea oil and gas. It mentioned that a study was still being continued on banking, insurance and building societies. It called for a new Industry Act and planning agreements. It reiterated the demand that if financial aid was given to a company then the government should take a share holding in the company.

The manifesto was a clear indication that Labour was at last determined to extend public ownership into the profitable sectors of the economy. However, by the October election these proposals had

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been watered down. The references to various industries as prime targets for takeover had been deleted. On banking and insurance the statement had been amended to state that early proposals would be put forward to ensure that these sectors made a better contribution to the economy.

Since the October election an Industry Act has been introduced setting up a National Enterprise Board and bringing in planning agreements. This however suffers from major defects. The planning agreements are voluntary. Without compulsory powers it is hardly likely that many companies will enter into planning agreements which call for them to reveal their plans, on investment, manpower, sales and profits, to the government and trade unions.

The NEB will remain a toothless tabby cat, until it receives adequate funds. At the moment it is restricted to £1,000 million, a proportion of which has already been accounted for by British Leyland. To be effective it needs at least £1,000 million per year, and if it is going to allocate finance effectively between its subsidiary companies it needs to develop a banking role. In order to facilitate this it should be allowed to take over a merchant bank and a joint stock bank. Also, these would provide funds in addition to those from government sources.

If it is to have a meaningful role it is essential that it does not become a revamped Industrial Reorganisation Corporation or a repository for lame ducks. It needs powers to acquire companies compulsorily if it believes that their acquisition is vital to its development or in the wider interests of the nation. A further act of parliament should be introduced to give it these powers if the frontiers of public ownership are to be extended.

At the moment the existing nationalised industries are being asked to make economies and are being forced to introduce higher fares or increased prices. These have fallen very heavily on the consumer and have particularly affected the poorer sections of the community. We still have not worked out a social policy for the nationalised industries; nor have we produced an integrated transport or fuel policy. Tony Crosland is, however, committed to producing an integrated transport policy in the near future, and Tony Benn is working on an integrated fuel policy in which coal will have an important role

After successive Labour governments, industrial democracy has not yet been introduced into the nationalised industries which are still run on Morrisonian lines, with the workers as remote from the important decisions as they were under private enterprise. It is hoped that a measure of industrial democracy will be introduced into the

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aircraft and shipbuilding industries after nationalisation, and talks are being held by the Minister of State for Industry with the trade unions and the chairmen of the organising committees for the shipbuilding and aircraft industries to hammer out proposals on industrial democracy. It is vital that we introduce a new concept of public ownership in these industries.

If we are really intent on extending public ownership into the commanding heights of the economy, we shall not achieve this unless we move into the finance sector. Without this type of decision we shall not pave the way for the change from a capitalist to a socialist society.

Tony Benn once said that 'the National Coal Board plus Lord Robens does not add up to socialism.' Many would agree that he can say that again, but the battle to extend the frontiers of public ownership must be won. Those in the Labour Party who do not want to see any changes in the *status quo* and who believe in a mixed economy dominated by private enterprise must be defeated if we are going to reverse the perilously weak position of British industry—which is becoming worse year by year. It can be reversed and we can plan for success, but this can only be done by harnessing the full potential of the people through public ownership.

A BETTER LIFE FOR ALL

Jimmy Graham*

UNDER the above heading, the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) have launched a province-wide campaign which has got off to an excellent start, despite jaundiced reporting by the news media, including press, radio and television.

The campaign for an end to violence, from any quarter, including sectarian murders and assassinations, plus the violence of unemployment, is spelt out under the following six headings: 1. The right to live free from violence, sectarianism, intimidation and discrimination; 2. The right to security of employment, and well paid work; 3. The right to associate freely and to advocate change by peaceful means; 4. The right to good housing accommodation; 5. The right to equality of educational opportunity; and 6. The right to adequate social

* Jimmy Graham, who writes in his personal capacity, is Secretary of the Northern Ireland No 43 District Committee of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, and Belfast District Secretary of the Engineering Section of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers.

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services to protect the well being and living standards of the aged, the young, the sick, the unemployed and the socially deprived.

Almost 400 delegates, from all over the province, packed into Transport House for the inaugural meeting, which was an inspiration as speaker after speaker illustrated their understanding of the gravity of the present situation, and their determination to do something about it by fully supporting the campaign.

Petitions are now circulating everywhere: the aim is 500,000 signatures which, out of a population of 1,500,000, is a huge target. There is every confidence, however, that the target can be met. One may well ask what useful purpose will be served by signing a petition, but what must be understood is that in Northern Ireland, after seven years of terror, even to approach people to sign regardless of political or religious belief, and thereby converse with them, is an achievement in itself.

As the trade unions are the only organisations which embrace and cross all sections of the community, the campaign can therefore unite all citizens of goodwill in a common cause, and by uniting them will succeed in isolating the men of violence, the bigots and political opportunists.

As an example of how this can come about, and at the same time to expose the despicable role of the news media, on the morning when the first signings of the petition were to take place in public, at the Belfast City Hall, the local BBC radio brought about a confrontation between the Northern Ireland Officer of the ICTU and the Chairman of the Ulster Workers' Council. During the course of the interview the UWC spokesman could not disagree with any of the six points, but could only slander the organisers as 'republicans and communists' with their headquarters in the Republic of Ireland.

Similarly, when a United Ulster Unionist Coalition (UUUC) MP for Westminster (a Reverend gentleman, by the way) was interviewed on TV he also stated that, whilst people might sign if they wished, and he could not oppose any of the six points, the campaign would not be supported by the Unionist Coalition.

This surely is a clear indication of the vicious, sectarian, bigoted nature of the UUUC and its cohorts, and at the same time is an exposure of the role of the news media, who dig up unelected, self-appointed leaders of organisations such as the UWC, and place them on a level with the democratically elected representatives of the trade union movement. Incidentally, one of the points made by the UWC spokesman was that there had been no consultation within the trade union movement about the campaign. This, despite the

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fact that, when the UWC and their paramilitary allies called the strike which brought down the Assembly, there was no talk about consultation.

The campaign however does not confine itself to ending the violence of sectarian killings, but covers most aspects of social life, and of these unemployment could well be the major issue on which real unity and support can be won. For January 1976, the official returns for unemployed were 57,988 or 11.1 per cent. This is an increase of 9,540 over the previous month's figures which were 48,448 or 9.3 per cent. Compare these figures with January 1975 when the total unemployed were 34,407 or 6.6 per cent. The rate of increase in unemployment is catastrophic.

Many more closures of factories are expected. For instance, whereas Rolls-Royce are rationalising their business in Great Britain, thereby cutting down the number employed, they are going to close their factory in Northern Ireland completely, throwing 800 workers on the street: hardly what one would call a proportionate cut-back in labour in the Rolls-Royce consortium. Now rumours are prevalent that RAF Sydenham (previously Royal Naval Air Yard) and 23 MU (RAF) Aldergrove—employing approximately 2,000 between them—have a large question mark behind them, and may be closed as a result of decisions to be taken by the Ministry of Defence in the near future.

In their campaign against unemployment, the Northern Ireland District Committee of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions have repeatedly met the Minister of State responsible for commerce, and have stressed the need for direct government intervention to prevent further closures and halt the rise in unemployment. Repeatedly we have been told that the government cannot tell private industry (for example the STC factory closure in Larne) what to do; yet, where the business is 100 per cent government controlled and owned, decisions are taken which are to the detriment of the economy in the province. For instance, the IEL factory in the computer industry in Northern Ireland was 100 per cent government owned, yet it was closed down completely. Rolls-Royce is a further example. RAF Sydenham had 25 per cent of its labour force paid off because of a government decision to transfer work from Sydenham to Britain; and now there is the possibility of further cuts of Aldergrove and Sydenham.

These decisions by government seem to support those in Northern Ireland who have accepted the UUUC assertion that an economic withdrawal by the government from Northern Ireland is on the

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cards—completely overlooking, of course, the reason why Britain is in Northern Ireland in the first place. But it does undermine the credibility of the trade unions because of our inability to alter decisions of government, despite the number of occasions on which we have met the Minister and pointed this out to him.

The full Northern Ireland Committee are now at Westminster, as this article is being written, and are scheduled to meet the Prime Minister. No doubt the points made in the foregoing will be discussed. Not that the writer has any great hopes that, as a result of this meeting, there will be a reversal of government policies which are causing the problems. Only when it becomes accepted fact that loyalty to socialist principles and policies is more important than loyalty to individuals and government will there be a change in government policy.

Perhaps I have left the most important factor to the last. For many years now, the TUC have had a resolution adopted by Congress calling for a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. During the passage of time, most other political parties have recognised the necessity for such a measure. It is precisely because of the absence of a Bill of Rights that the political parties in Northern Ireland refuse to compromise to any degree. A comprehensive Bill of Rights could well be—nay, will be—the foundation for devolved parliament in Northern Ireland, because, regardless of the composition of an elected parliament or government in the province, a second chamber, composed of elected representatives from mass organisations such as the trade unions and tenants' associations, would be the best guarantee against abuse of such a Bill by any Northern Ireland government.

The unity being forged in the struggle for 'A Better Life for All' by the ICTU, can bring about such a situation, but the assistance of the British TUC and all trade unionists in these islands are a necessary prerequisite to achieving our objective.

JOHN LEWIS (1889-1976)

A valued friend and helper of *Labour Monthly* passed away on February 12—John Lewis, Marxist lecturer and author on philosophical questions. His books were in constant demand. Up to the end his alert mind and good humour, in spite of growing physical disabilities, impressed everyone who knew him. In addition to reviews of a number of works on philosophy, psychology and the Marxist-Christian dialogue between 1963 and 1972, he wrote several articles for *Labour Monthly* before and during the second world war. The Editorial Board sends its deepest sympathy to his wife Betty (Reid) and their children.

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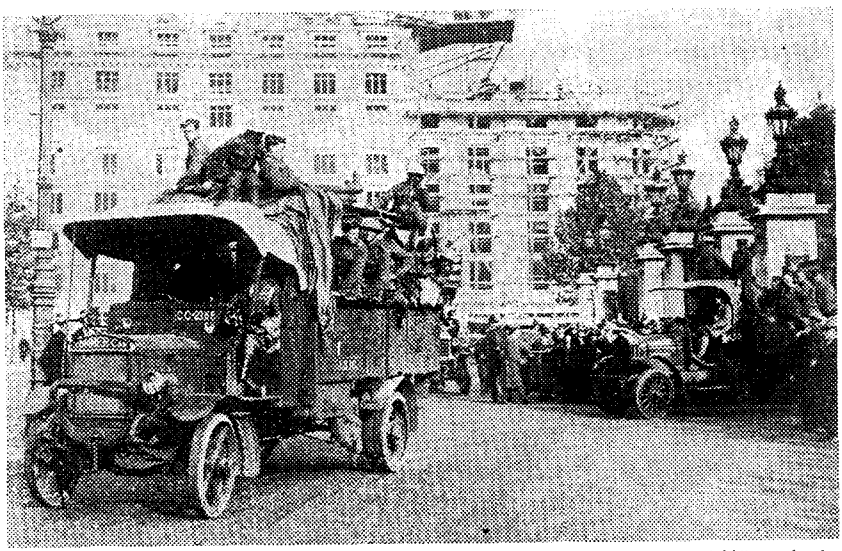
THE FIRST MODERN THREATS OF A GENERAL STRIKE
1 - 1919

On September 26, 1919, the railwaymen (both the National Union of Railwaymen and the locomen's union, ASLEF), after seven months of fruitless negotiations, struck 100 per cent against heavy wage cuts. In a few days Britain was approaching complete economic standstill. Premier Lloyd George called it 'an anarchist conspiracy', called out the troops and urged local authorities to form a 'Civic Guard' (such as reactionary governments were forming to shoot down workers in many other countries). University students, public school boys and rapscallions generally eagerly enrolled.

But millions of workers in other industries began preparations to back the railwaymen. Numerous branch and trades council resolutions demanded the formation of 'joint strike committees' of all workers: it was clear that a general strike was looming ahead. The government on October 5 surrendered, the wage cuts were called off and the railwaymen won a complete victory. The lessons struck deep, as 1920 proved.



Photograph by courtesy of the Marx Memorial Library, London

Fusiliers in steel helmets leaving Hyde Park in lorries *en route* to guard the railways, September 30, 1919.

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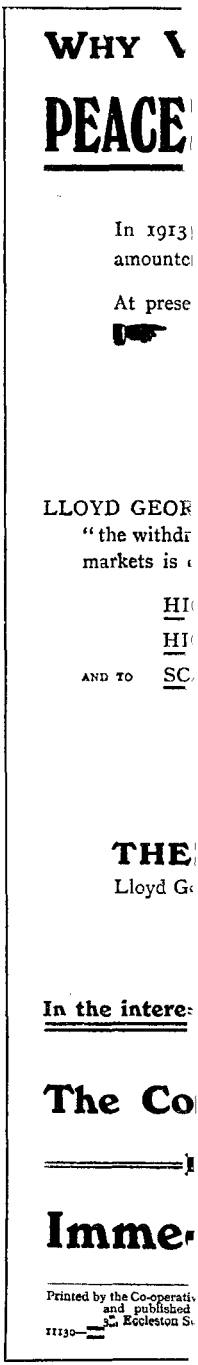
THE FIRST MODERN THREATS OF A GENERAL STRIKE

11 - 1920

All through 1919 working class protest was rising against the British invasion of Soviet Russia, particularly after the Labour Party Conference in June by a two-to-one majority called for 'unreserved use of political and industrial power' to stop the invasion. Following successive defeats of Churchill's 'White hopes'—Kolchak, Yudenich and Denikin—by the Red Army, British forces were indeed withdrawn from north Russia. But support of Wrangel in the south continued: when the reactionary Polish government attacked Soviet Russia in April 1920, Britain backed it to the full; and when the Red Army began driving back the Poles, Lloyd George—despite a warning refusal of London dockers in May to load the *Jolly George* with munitions for Poland—openly threatened full-scale war, ordering warships to the Baltic (August 4). On August 7 and 8, responding to a Labour Party urgent circular, hundreds of demonstrations against the war peril were held all over the country, many of them adopting resolutions for industrial action and the formation of 'action committees', which were called for in a telegraphed appeal to 30 main centres from the newly-formed Communist Party. On August 9, leaders of the Labour Party and TUC formed a National Council of Action, and warned the government that 'any and every form of withdrawal of labour' would be used to stop war on Soviet Russia. On August 13, a great conference of trade union executives, representing 6½ million workers, endorsed this action, and called on trades councils and Labour Parties to get local Councils of Action set up. About 350 such bodies were formed, and within 48 hours Lloyd George was assuring all and sundry that it was all a misunderstanding, no war was threatened. The lessons of 1919 had been well learned—and they bore fruit six years later.

A.R.

Leaflets issued in 1920 by the Council of Action Campaign Committee



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"COUNCIL OF ACTION."—Series No. 5.

THE

GOVERNMENT FOREIGN POLICY MEANS WAR.

The Poles began the war against Russia for their own imperialistic aims, but the British and French Governments have forced them to continue it to help first Deniken and now Wrangel.

In September, 1919, the Polish Government wanted to make Peace with Russia, and Mr. Lloyd George and M. Clemenceau forbade it. Mr. Lloyd George promised Poland **"the fullest economic and military support of the Entente"** in continuing the war.

In December, 1919, M. Clemenceau said in the French parliament that he and Mr. Lloyd George wanted to put a **"barbed-wire enclosure"** round Russia, and that, if the Poles could not beat the Russians, the Czecho-Slovaks, the Roumanians, and other peoples would be called upon to help them.

In January, 1920, the Poles were **urged to make an offensive** against the Soviet Republic. Later on Mr. Lloyd George advised the Poles not to make the offensive to which he had previously agreed, but the French Government insisted on it, and it began at the end of April. **The King,** on May 3rd, sent a telegram of congratulation to Marshal Pilsudski, who during the war was fighting on the side of the Germans, but who was now attacking the Russian Workers' Republic. The Russians, however, repelled their aggressors and almost reached the gates of Warsaw.

On the advice of the British Government the Poles sued for peace, but on the advice of the French Government they delayed peace negotiations on various pretexts. When at last they met the Russian peace delegates at Minsk, the Poles rejected all the Russian peace proposals, although these proposals had been described by Lloyd George himself as reasonable.

The French Government advised their rejection because the French Government, for its own purposes, wants the Poles to remain armed and go on fighting.

WHAT ARE THESE PURPOSES?

The French Government is allied with all the Russian Tsarist counter-revolutionaries. Its policy is to use Poland as a catspaw to help Wrangel, whom it has recognised, to overthrow the Russian Republic and restore the Tsarism. Agents of the French Government and the Russian Tsarists are

P.T.O.

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The Technical, Administrative and Supervisory Section of the AUEW

will be represented at the March 27 Assembly on Unemployment and hopes to meet you there

Barry Seager
President

Ken Gill
General Secretary

AUEW-TASS, Onslow Hall, Little Green, Richmond Surrey

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THE RICHARD NIXON REVENGE ACT

William Pomeroy

AS the people of the United States celebrate this year the bicentennial of the beginning of their national freedom struggle, the American revolution, their alleged representatives in the US Congress are in the advanced stages of putting through the legislative mills an horrendous Act that would wipe out a vast range of democratic liberties. American history could in one sense be called a 200-year battle to give substance to the noble precepts of the Declaration of Independence, and the present congressional brew is one of the worst threats to hard-fought-for civil rights that has been concocted over those turbulent years.

The menacing instrument bears the title of 'Criminal Justice Reform Act of 1975', and is more familiarly known as 'S.1' or Senate Bill No 1, according to the order in which it was introduced in the first session of the 94th Congress on January 15, 1975. Ostensibly it is intended to reform the archaic federal Criminal Code that contains some very outmoded definitions and penalties. Actually, it is a catch-all for the most repressive demands of the law-and-order brigades, and for the past year or more the alarm bells have been ringing loudly in the progressive movements in the United States.

In its inception, the reform move had laudable aims. It was initiated by the Lyndon Johnson administration in 1966, when a National Commission on Reform of the Criminal Laws was set up. It laboured long, and by the time its draft proposals were submitted in January 1971 the Richard Nixon administration was in office and well on the road to Watergate.

Nixon and his cronies were horrified by the comparatively liberal tone of the Commission's proposals which, although with their own defects, tended to cut down injustices in the old Criminal Code. Coming at a time when Nixon was trumpeting for 'law and order' and was setting his sights on peace marchers, a critical press, black power movements, and the leakers of the Pentagon Papers, among those whom he considered his and the republic's enemies, the Commision's proposals were viewed as aiding and abetting a subversive permissive society. Attorney-General John Mitchell threw the proposals into the waste baskets.

In 1973 the Nixon-Mitchell combination nurtured two bills to supplant the reform moves. One, SB1400, was whipped up by Mitchell

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and the Department of Justice. The other, SB1, was produced from the offices of Senators McClellan and Hruska. These two bills were consolidated to form the present 'S.1' that has already been ushered through preliminary committees and is poised for passage by the Senate.

'S.1' contains the legal and judicial philosophy of an administration that has gained for itself a place in American history books as probably the most corrupt, most abusive, and most disdainful of both laws and civil rights that has held office in the 200 celebrated years. It is not a philosophy that left the White House and the Halls of Congress with the exit of Nixon and his convicted crew. On June 19, 1975, President Gerald Ford endorsed 'S.1' as a force for 'domestic tranquillity', and said 'I call upon the Congress to act swiftly.'

The US trade union paper, *Missouri Teamster*, has termed 'S.1' as the 'Richard Nixon Revenge Act'. If adopted, along with the version presented to the House of Representatives as HR3907, it would, among other horrific things, nullify the Watergate proceedings that exposed the criminal acts of the Nixon gang and make it impossible for such democratic steps ever to occur again.

What is 'S.1'? It is a 753-page, extremely wordy but vague compendium of criminal code formulations that has been called by civil liberties organisations a legislative 'chamber of horrors'. Embedded in the tangle of words are the following:

1) Legalisation of officially sanctioned crimes like those associated with Watergate. The bill gives immunity from prosecution to federal officers and their employees, and anyone acting at their direction for crimes committed in reliance on a written statement by the head of a governmental agency that the criminal acts are lawful, even though the statement is later found 'invalid or erroneous'. Literally this installs the doctrine of 'superior orders' that was rejected at the Nuremberg trials. This section of the bill, if lawful during the Nixon period, would have protected Nixon from exposure.

2) Reinstatement of the notorious Smith Act provisions (thrown out by the Supreme Court in 1957) under which Communist Party leaders were imprisoned for 'advocating' revolution. The new bill makes criminal any advocacy which 'incites other persons to engage in conduct that then *or at some future time* would *facilitate* the forcible overthrow' of the government (emphasis added—W.P.). Penalties under this vague definition would be up to 15 years' imprisonment and/or up to $100,000 fine.

3) Legalisation and broad expansion of wire-tapping for wherever 'danger to the structure' of government is suspected.

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4) Unrestricted permission of entrapment. Federal agents and their hirelings are authorised to act as provocateurs and to engage in criminal activity to induce people to commit crimes; they may be convicted for such crimes unless they can prove that they did not have a 'predisposition' to commit them.

5) Provision of up to three years in prison and/or $100,000 fine for any person who crosses a state line to participate in a 'riot', a 'riot' being defined as 'tumultous conduct' by five or more persons that 'creates a grave *danger* of injury or damage to persons or property.' The word 'tumultous' can refer to mere noise, while 'danger' is open to broad interpretation.

6) The making of a wide variety of strikes and demonstrations criminal, including delay or obstruction of 'production, repair or delivery' or 'any property particularly suited for national defence use' if it should happen that this is 'in reckless disregard of the fact that his conduct *might* impair the ability of the United States to *prepare for* defence activities.' Turned into crimes are picketing of such procedures as delivering supplies to a fascist country like Chile, or demonstrating against recruitment or conscription centres, or participating in 'unusual' strikes by public employees or of a wild-cat nature.

7) Establishment of a wide-ranging government censorship under which it would be a crime to disclose any vaguely defined 'classified information' or 'national defence information' to any 'unauthorised person'. It would enable imprisonment for up to 15 years and $100,000 fines for a Daniel Ellsberg who made public the Pentagon Papers, and would send to gaol for three to fifteen years government employees, journalists and editors who communicate a great range of information on foreign affairs or defence matters.

8) Increase of the penalty for 'contempt'—i.e. refusal to co-operate with government committees—from one year in prison and $1,000 fine to three years in prison and $100,000 fine.

9) Prohibiting, with penalty of one year's imprisonment, the interruption of *any* governmental function or 'official proceeding' such as a hearing 'by means of noise, by means of violent or tumultous behaviour or disturbance, or by any other means'. Literally, it makes heckling a crime.

10) Definition of 'criminal attempt' (which is made punishable with the same sentence as for a completed crime) as an attempt to commit a crime if a person's conduct 'indicates his intent to complete commission of a crime', with the person considered guilty despite the fact that 'it was factually or legally impossible for the actor to

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commit the crime, if the crime could have been committed had the circumstances been as the actor believed them to be.'

Innumerable other sections of 'S.1' with similar provisions could be cited (abolition of the defence of insanity, and wide enlargement of mandatory death penalties, for example). In general, it would make illegal and punishable almost every form of civil rights activity. Former US Senator Sam Ervin, who was a co-sponsor of the original measure to reform the Criminal Code, has said this about the present bill:

> S.1, in its present form, is simply atrocious and would establish what is essentially a police state in which liberties of the American people would exist only by tolerance of public officials.

Two of the most prominent US legal scholars, Professor Thomas I. Emerson of Yale Law School and Professor Vern Countryman of Harvard Law School, issued a joint statement after study of the bill, saying:

> In our judgement the enactment of S.1, the pending bill to revise the federal Criminal Code, would constitute an unparalleled disaster for the system of individual rights in the United States. . . . It is impossible to enumerate all the danger points.

If not for the alarm raised by civil liberties groups, congressional proceedings on 'S.1' would have been cloaked in silence. A National Committee Against Repressive Legislation, with chapters in many states, has been leading the fight against the bill, with the American Civil Liberties Union actively participating. The National Conference of Black Lawyers, the National Alliance Against Racial and Political Repression (of which Angela Davis is co-chairman), and other concerned organisations have been conducting meetings nation-wide and distributing eye-opening literature.

The national bodies of an increasing number of trade unions have come out against 'S.1', including the United Steelworkers, the United Electrical Workers, the Newspaper Guild and the Amalgamated Meatcutters, and many local unions have passed resolutions condemning it. *Steel Labour*, the organ of the United Steelworkers, editorialised:

> It is almost beyond belief that in the aftermath of Watergate—with all its lessons of power-hungry individuals who found their way to the executive offices—that such legislation would even be considered by a Congress still scarred from that near-disastrous encounter. S.1 is a bill which is unamendable

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—it needs to be killed, for under the protection of law the dark days of Nixon years could return again with possible disastrous consequences.

Opponents of 'S.1' have been seeking to alert progressive organisations in Western Europe to the dangers of such police state legislation, pointing out that, in view of the dominant role played by the US in the Nato alliance and in other ways, the influence of right-wing, repressive laws adopted by the US Congress could be broad and damaging wherever US power is exerted.

Many Americans celebrating the bicentennial of their revolution and its Declaration of Independence have in mind the fact that the US Constitution which was adopted at the conclusion of the freedom struggle contained no Bill of Rights, and that a Bill of Rights came into being in the form of constitutional amendments only after further struggles within the new nation. Among these were struggles against a repressive Alien and Sedition Act adopted by the first US Congress. After 200 years, civil rights are having to be fought for all over again by the American people.

HOTTING UP THE COLD WAR

Ivor Montagu

FOR months past, undeterred by fact, a campaign of denigration has been proceeding against the Soviet Union and all its works. This has been particularly true in the US and the UK. It is entirely comprehensible that it is in their own days of crisis that the example of socialism should be feared in the lands of capitalism, and especially in the bad-lands of imperialism—the US that aspires to now unattainable empire, the UK that drifts besotted by its hankering for the Empire that is gone. The spectre that haunts them is not the imperfections of socialism as hitherto realised, but precisely its triumphs and the problems it has already solved.

The cold war of the immediate post-war era, that associated with McCarthy, sprang from the need of parasites of capitalism to slander and discredit the USSR for the glory it had won by its share in the common victory of the allies and the liberation from fascism, and to make the people forget the obloquy that capitalism had earned by its responsiblity for building up fascism to a world threat. The slander campaign of today is grounded on the need for a new lie, the need to forget that the present economic crisis is not a world crisis, as its begetters pretend, and that hundreds of millions in the

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world today live safeguarded from its misfortunes, its mass unemployment, its waste of resources and human lives.

Marx wrote: 'Hegel says somewhere that, upon the stage of universal history, all great events and personalities reappear in one fashion or another. He forgot to add that, on the first occasion, they appear as tragedy, the second, farce.'

What is so eloquent about the cold war this time is the people who are not saying anything.

The original cold war was a tragedy. Roosevelt and Churchill had recognised that, if the allies stuck together after the war, future peace would be assured. When Roosevelt died, the survivor—Churchill—with Truman and Attlee yielded to the temptation of their short-lived monopoly of the atomic bomb to try to assert a so-called 'American century', and grief took the place of peace.

When Maggie Thatcher gaily launches her new clarion call for an old crusade—Soviet arms, Soviet expansion, Soviet perfidy, Soviet barbarism—it is treated with rather heavy irony in the Soviet press, and elsewhere down-graded as a matter of only local interest: the leader of Her Majesty's opposition, her economic and economising policy largely adopted by the Labour government, in search of something to oppose. Her accusations of gullibility towards Soviet diplomacy and idleness in defence are supported primarily by Reggie Maudling as shadow Foreign Secretary, the strangest political appointment since the Roman Emperor Caligula made his horse a consul*, with backing from the great minds of Lord Chalfont and Bernard Levin.

The cold war manoeuvring in the US—Ford and Reagan each seeking to outdo the other on the right, Rumsfeld to be as bellicose and as serviceable to the military-industrial complex as Schlesinger, Kissinger not to be outshone by Monahan—is just the ordinary small change and hatchet work of a Presidential election year, Tweedledee and Tweedledum stuff. Recognising that American administrations always do observe their armaments to be inferior to those of USSR as budget time comes up, and that this year can be no exception because of the drying up of the Vietnam swill-trough, everyone takes Rumsfeld's asking Congress for £35,000 million for 'defence' pretty calmly, understanding that some of the profits are bound to provide spin-off in contributions to the election campaign, and that it is the President whom he is thus defending.

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* Reggie, the dupe of architect Poulson, seeking to advise the world as an expert on who may or may not safely be trusted, is a sight to make angels weep.

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Outside—what voices in support? The military boss of Nato, General Alexander Haig, Nixon's old major-domo, and Luns, its Secretary General, busy with cod in several senses—they speak up as though their livelihoods depend upon it, which, after all, they do. Otherwise a deafening silence.

Even the *Times* notices it, and has a headline on its Defence Correspondent's article: 'The danger of crying Wolf.' The point is the world has changed. Since the last time it has gone through a generation of experience.

The arms race has no sense any more (if it ever had). Both the US and USSR now possess weapons of mass destruction and means of delivering them capable of inflicting unacceptable damage each upon the other. No protection, no first strike capacity, no measure of superiority can possibly alter this. Of what use to be able to destroy your opponent twice if he can destroy you once? Once is enough. The arms race cannot therefore benefit anyone but those who profit from arms manufacture or feed on self-importance.

Britain itself neither possesses, nor will it ever again be able to afford to possess, accurate means of weapon delivery sufficiently penetrative of modern defence systems. The entire island, compact and with a dense population, is totally indefensible in modern war and can even be rendered uninhabitable for a long time. The pretence at 'defence' is wholly a bluff that deceives no one except the hoodwinked population that pays for it.

Silence on these two aspects demonstrates that the orator is stupid, or else insincere, pursuing an end unavowed.

How convince the onlooker that the shadow Foreign Secretary is not a parrot or a clown when he speaks of the intervention of Moscow gold for British Reds (of which neither he, once Home Secretary, nor anyone else has ever contrived to turn up a penny piece), not only after the revealed role of US dollars for assassination plots and eventual government overthrow in Chile, but in the very same week that has revealed wholesale bribery by US firms: £5 million in Japan, millions too in Holland and apparently Turkey, £153 million in all from 20 big companies spent in 'questionable and illicit practices' according to data compiled by the US Library of Congress; and a total of £65 million paid out to Italian political parties (half a million by ministers of the US Ambassador to an Italian general in government employ to carry out a putsch for which his nerve failed) and another £3 million only last month from the CIA to Italian 'centre' politicians to prolong the present Italian crisis by preventing Communists from entering the government?

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How waken concern about *Soviet* 'expansion', in a world that has seen the planting of US bases all round the Soviet periphery; the fiasco of the Bay of Pigs; the fiasco of the long years of US effort to seize south-east Asia; the planting of the US armed, US financed, US protected, aggressive state of Israel and expulsion of the rightful inhabitants in the Middle East; the bribing of the Kurdish leaders to refuse the autonomy offers and revolt unsuccessfully against Iraq; adding as a minor incidental the payments to Britain to deport the entire population of a British island (Diego Garcia), derisively compensated, from their homes in order to hand it over to the US as an aircraft base?

Of what use telling the modern world its liberties are in danger when everywhere the self-styled saviours have succeeded in establishing a regime of which they approved—South Korea, Indonesia, Chile, temporarily in South Vietnam and Greece—it has meant a regime of corruption, torture, thousands imprisoned without trial, assassination by police and the siphoning off of their resources for foreign profit? At such a price millions must pray for salvation to be averted.

In vain is the snare spread in sight of the bird. It can hardly be comforting to hear the open threat from Kissinger that all aid would be withdrawn from developing countries that dared to vote against, even to criticise, the US at the UN.

The cruder sort of cold war no longer carries conviction on the world stage, however tempting an asset it may still be in the closed and increasingly brain-washed arena of Anglo-Saxon domestic politics. It may be good enough for British radio, TV, reporters and leader-writers to prate about 'Russian-backed MPLA' and 'Marxist MPLA' till the hair curls in the back rows of Mrs Thatcher's audiences about a far-off Angola of which they deliberately knew nothing so long as Portugal, Nato and fascist, held it for Western investors to make money out of it. To Africans, the MPLA is 'OAU-chosen', 'majority-of-African-states-backed', and fighting for All-Africa against the army of apartheid South Africa and the US-financed European mercenaries who invaded Angola long before Cuban aid arrived. For crude, anti-Soviet unrealism of this kind much of the rest of the world can only have a sort of cold-eyed contempt or indifference.

No. Anti-communism always entails fantasy and misrepresentation leading to disaster; and Hitler, Thieu, Papadopoulos, Pinochet and Colonel Callan are not really good company for Mrs Thatcher to keep. The chief danger about such lies is that you begin to believe

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them yourself, and then anything may happen. You may win an election in the short term, but you rapidly lose all sense of reality, and woe betide the poor, conned voter when the chickens come home to roost. The first, and the final, victims of Nazism were the German people themselves. Hotting up the cold war can be playing with fire.

In quite a number of countries, among quite a number of people, experience is teaching the lesson that, just as war has always been too dangerous to leave to the generals, peace is much too important to leave to the politicians. There is, after all, as Churchill said at the end of his life, a better way of settling things than war, war, and that is jaw, jaw. If detente is not yet good enough, make it better not worse, but our own Concord has yet to break through the media barrier. Perhaps the York Forum on Ending the Arms Race will help to blow the make-believe away. Free speech in Britain must not be only for the somewhat rusted Iron Lady and her like, if our nation's future is to be saved.

PAUL ROBESON

Harry Francis*

BOTH music and the theatre lost one of their greatest and unique sounds when, in 1961, Paul Robeson was compelled, through reasons of ill-health, to retire from his profession. A voice loved by millions of people throughout the world, with his death on January 23 the movements for world peace and civil rights lost one of their most devoted sons.

It was during the decade following his 1928 success as Joe in 'Show Boat' that, as a London resident, he found himself drawn into the class struggle, first through his concern from childhood about the oppression of the Negro people and then, very soon, through his recognition of the fact that oppressed people of all colours suffered exploitation by capitalist society.

When, for the reason of colour, he was unable to get his son accepted into a London school, he decided to send him to Moscow where he knew the lad would be free from racial discrimination. It was in those years that Paul developed an immense admiration for the Soviet Union which he retained for the rest of his life, and became a devoted friend of the British working class from whom, combined with his study of the works of Marx and Lenin, he claimed to have learned his socialism.

*Harry Francis was, until his retirement, Assistant General Secretary of the Musicians' Union.

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From 1932 onwards he threw himself into the bitter struggle against fascism and persecution of all kinds, and in those years gave his services for the anti-Franco forces: he went to Spain to sing and talk to the International Brigade. He also sang at concerts to help the National Unemployed Workers' Movement, and the movement that was then seeking to establish a people's front in Britain. It was in those years as a professional musician that I was privileged to meet and work with him and to enjoy a friendship that continued until his death.

Returning to the US some months before the second world war, Paul played an active part in the by then official struggle against fascism. He was commended by the Roosevelt administration for his great contribution to the war effort, but it was inevitable that in the early post-war years, he should fall foul of the notorious Un-American Activities Committee.

The withdrawal of his passport, and the ultimately successful and world-wide campaign for its restoration, and his activities from the day, in July 1958, when he again came to Britain until his final return to the States in December 1963, are obviously the subject for a book. His last public performance was on March 5, 1961, when, in London's Royal Albert Hall, he sang at the *Daily Worker* rally.

LABOUR MONTHLY FIFTY YEARS AGO

It is significant that South Africa should be taking a lead in forcing the coloured races into economic serfdom and political helotry. Throughout the last century and more, she has been perfecting the science of turning men into robots. As late as 1834, the Boer farmers were battening on the labour of the Negroes and the Malayas bought from the English slave-dealers. . . .

What is the motive behind the white policy of enforcing racial subjection? That policy is, of course, intended to ensure the supremacy as an exploiting race of the tiny minority, one-and-a-half millions in all, of the white community. The ostensible justification for it, however, that is put forward is the necessity for preventing the racial purity of this minority from being submerged. . . .

It is not whiteness, but civilisation that should be the goal of South Africa and similar countries. If the white colonists care only for their racial purity, let them remove themselves from countries where they are not the rightful inhabitants. But if, in order ostensibly to preserve their racial purity but really to maintain the race dominance of one-sixth of the population, they persist in the policy of attempting to separate and lock up the overwhelming majority of the people like cattle in the kraals, then let them beware for they are building their whited sepulchres on the slopes of a rumbling volcano.

(From 'Colour *v.* Class in South Africa' by M. G. Desai, *Labour Monthly*, March 1926)

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MERCENARIES AND THE LAW

F. H. Amphlett Micklewright
Barrister-at-Law

READERS of the *Sunday Times* for January 25 must have been somewhat surprised to learn that it is possible to advertise, in a newspaper published in London, for recruits to a body of mercenaries, and to interview applicants. It is also possible to arrange for their transport from this country with the set purpose of using them to fight against the left-wing troops in Angola. Such seems to have been the exploit of Norman Mervyn Hall, a former sergeant in the Parachute Regiment, who was dismissed from the army in 1972 for supplying arms to the Ulster Volunteer Force! Promoter of the exploit seems to be a front organisation, Security Advisory Services, an undertaking with a London address. Thousands of US dollars seem to have been available for the exploit.

The press of January 29 carried the story a stage further. A band of these potential mercenaries were flown out of Heathrow on the previous day, on the first stage of their flight to Angola. They refused to talk to journalists and scuffled with photographers. In fact, they ensured that individual photographic recognition was impossible. Similar happenings took place at Brussels airport. It is only possible to guess why they did not parade themselves as anti-Marxist heroes, a pose that some of the world press would have applauded. Possibly some faces were too well known and might have recalled earlier dubious incidents.

At once the question arises as to how far such conduct is legal. There is widespread feeling that, if it is legal, its legality ought to be removed very quickly. A gang of strong-arm thugs can be recruited in order to interfere in a war abroad which could have wide-ranging political consequences. The law on the subject is somewhat complicated and has the appeance of a pragmatic answer to particular issues arising at some exact moment in past history.

In the first place, it is illegal to raise and maintain a private army on any soil over which the Crown has jurisdiction. Such is the effect of the Statute of Livery and Maintenance 1485, which is still in force today. Henry VII wished to stamp out the baronial armies which had grown up during the Wars of the Roses and to replace them with a strong, centralised army under the Crown. The Statute provided the legal means of enforcing his will. To this day, the will of Henry VII prevails in English law, and the recruitment of a private

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army, together with its maintenance, upon United Kingdom soil, is a serious criminal offence.

But, in the second place, there is nothing illegal about a UK citizen going to a foreign country and joining a foreign army. Such were the old soldiers of fortune, or the Scots and Irish who joined anti-Hanoverian armies. A good contemporary example is that of the Foreign Legion maintained by the French government. Of course, a UK citizen fighting for a foreign army against the forces of the Crown, or joining the army of a country with which the Crown is at war, would be guilty of treason. At first, there would seem to be nothing illegal about a foreign government recruiting in England, but this particular point was met by the Foreign Enlistment Act 1870, which forbade any such conduct.

It must be recalled, however, that the statute law can be enforced only with the consent of the government of the day. When D. N. Pritt tried to secure the enforcement of the Act in 1939 against recruitment of forces in London to fight for the Finns against the Soviet Union, the Chamberlainite Tories refused to move in the matter. The Public Order Act 1936 makes illegal the use of political uniforms, and there are various statutory provisions against illegal military training or drilling. These were invoked against some of the Chartists, whilst Colin Jordan was convicted in 1961 of a conspiracy to break these laws and to provide training for his quasi-Nazi recruits. Again, in January 1937 the government of the day threatened to prosecute the Independent Labour Party for opening recruiting offices on behalf of the Spanish republican army, and they had to be closed.

The whole issue of the mercenaries would seem to turn upon several points. It would be illegal to raise recruits to fight for the Smith regime in Rhodesia. But this is because the regime is illegal and its maintenance or armed support would involve activity against the Crown. In the case of Angola, a very different picture arises. The country is a foreign state, immersed in a civil war in which the Crown is not involved. Mercenaries are recruited here in order to fight against the popular forces over there. Open enlistment in London would probably be in breach of the Foreign Enlistment Act. But it is another matter if individuals are interviewed in London and actually enlist when they have left the country. At this stage, the potential recruits would have passed out of the jurisdiction of the English courts and the laws which they enforce.

A point which could still be watched would be where the law applies to a British subject in any part of the world. A British subject

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murdering anybody anywhere could be tried at the Central Criminal Court should he return within its jurisdiction. Could it be proved that any one mercenary had killed anybody in Angola, it might be worthwhile following up this point against him should he return to this country.

The enlistment of people to fight abroad for causes of which they approve has a long history. Radicals went from this country to fight for Garibaldi. Irish exiles fought in the American civil war. The International Brigade provided, during the Spanish civil war, a notable story of achievement on the government side. But care should be taken, in the age of General Kitson and Colonel Stirling, to watch any efforts to raise bodies of mercenaries. They may be used in Angola at one time but might appear later in operations in Rhodesia or even London.

However, the matter seems to have found its own natural level, by the subsequent exposure of the American dollars, the shady characters and the massacres perpetrated. The whole sordid affair is, nevertheless, sufficient to make a tightening of the law necessary.

HOW SOVIET LAWS ARE MADE

Maria Ivannikova

(*In the new spate of anti-Soviet propaganda during recent months, the alleged suppression of criticism in the USSR, and the lack of opportunity for working people to take part in making key economic and political decisions, has been a recurring theme. We asked a Soviet trade unionist to consider these allegations*—Ed. *LM*)

I AM a weaver. For more than 20 years I have been working at the 'Frunze' cotton factory in Moscow. The people of my district have elected me a deputy to the USSR Supreme Soviet for a second, four-year term. This fact is not exceptional. More than 50 per cent of my fellow Soviet MPs, 769 out of 1,577, are factory and collective farm workers. All of them take an active part in the work of our country's supreme authority.

Here is an example out of my own practice. A few years ago, on the instruction of my fellow weavers, I applied to the government to start technical re-equipment of enterprises in light industry. The gist of my proposal was as follows. Since the long-term Soviet programme for raising the well-being of the people attaches great

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importance to increasing the output of high quality goods, including clothing and textiles, the modernisation of weaving and clothing equipment should be speeded up.

I was backed by other deputies, and shortly afterwards the Council of Ministers adopted a decree: 'Measures for technical re-equipment of enterprises in light industry with more efficient facilities, and for further development of the capacities of light and textile engineering factories, in the 1970-1975 period.' The decree resulted in the mass output of new machinery.

It should be stressed that in the Soviet Union not only an MP but any citizen, any public organisation, ministry, institute or factory may apply to the USSR Supreme Soviet or to the government, making this or that proposal, and the latter is not left unheeded. If there is a rational kernel in the suggestion, it is discussed, and may provide the basis for a future decree or law.

Here is how the draft of 'Fundamentals of Legislation of the USSR and the Union Republics on Mineral Resources' was worked out before it became a law at the Supreme Soviet session in July 1975.

Six months before the session, a draft prepared by a team of experts was published in the newspapers for nation-wide discussion. The draft was discussed in the press and at meetings, and at the Standing Commissions of the Supreme Soviet. Hundreds of citizens, many organisations, most ministries, supreme soviets of the Union republics and autonomous republics*, regional, city and rural district soviets (municipal authorities) expressed their opinions on the draft. In all, over 1,500 proposals, notes and amendments were sent to the USSR Supreme Soviet. Here are some of them:

'The law must take account of the problem of the use and protection of mineral resources on the continental shelf of the USSR,' wrote staff members of the Leningrad Geological Research Institute.

'It is expedient to define the relative competence of the USSR and the Union republics in regulations for the use of mineral resources,' wrote a group of deputies of the Uzbekistan Supreme Soviet.

'One of the clauses of the law should note that during the exploitation of deposits it is necessary to ensure rational disposal of the main waste products, preventing any harmful effect on the environment,' wrote pensioner V. Korablyov from Minsk.

I can speak of these proposals in such detail because I was a member of a joint drafting commission of the two chambers of the

* There are 15 Union republics which make up the USSR, and within them 20 autonomous republics based on nationality—Ed. *LM*.

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Supreme Soviet. This commission studied all the amendments to the draft. We worked together with experts from the ministries, research and design institutes. Other MPs did not stand aloof from the discussion. Our new draft was repeatedly considered by the standing commissions of the Supreme Soviet. All proposals and remarks made by the MPs were discussed. Most were adopted, some were rejected, but in every case work continued until an acceptable decision was agreed on all sides. Here are some examples.

Deputy Alexei Shibayev (Saratov) suggested that a clause should be introduced in the 'Fundamentals' envisaging the adoption of legislation which would provide material incentives for users of minerals, and thus stimulate better use of the natural resources and improve protection of our minerals. This amendment was adopted.

Here is an excerpt from a speech by deputy Ivan Parhomenko, a collective farm worker: 'There is an oil well in our district. Nearby a gasser is spouting. The law should lay down that managers of enterprises are responsible for the utilisation of raw material by-products.' The conclusion of the drafting commission was: 'The proposal for the full use of mineral products is already covered by clause 28 of the draft.'

If one compares the first published version of the draft and the final text of the law, one will see lots of important amendments and additions made by MPs and members of the public. For instance, the respective jurisdictions of the Union and the Union republics in all matters connected with the use of mineral resources are outlined in a more clear-cut way, in two clauses instead of one. The role of local soviets in dealing with problems of the use and protection of mineral resources is defined more broadly, a new clause being introduced for the purpose. Twelve clauses have been radically redrafted.

That is how most legislative acts are arrived at in this country. The most important drafts are always issued for nation-wide discussion and become laws only after analysing the amendments and wishes expressed by the working people, which are carefully considered. For example, in the discussion of the draft 'Fundamentals of Legislation on Marriage and the Family', approved by the Supreme Soviet in 1968, more than 15,000 amendments, proposals and remarks were received from Soviet citizens.

This spirit of constructive polemics, taking into account the opinions of all who want to speak out, is typical not only for the Supreme Soviet and the Soviet government but also for the Soviet Communist Party when it takes decisions. The latest example is the draft of the CPSU Central Committee for the 25th Party Congress

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(held in February this year) of 'Guidelines for Development of the National Economy of the USSR in 1976-1980', which was published in all Soviet newspapers. The aim of such publication was essentially democratic: as a result of discussion of the draft in Party organisations, at workers' meetings and in the press, to reveal all points of view and to take into account all reasonable proposals and recommendations. It is this improved and amended version which was submitted for consideration by the Party Congress.

FIDEL CASTRO ON CUBA AND ANGOLA

(This extract is from a speech by Dr Fidel Castro, at the end of the first congress of the Cuban Communist Party, which was published in Granma, *January 11, 1976*—Ed. *LM)*

WHAT is the source of friction now? These Yankees owned Latin America but Latin America doesn't want any owners. Little by little it is rising up, and little by little it is becoming independent. They tried to isolate us from Latin America—and they did so for some time—but our ties are developing. They tried to isolate us from the rest of the world, but we have established links with the world, with the socialist nations and with the underdeveloped nations of Asia and Africa.

Now Angola is the source of friction. The imperialists seek to prevent us from aiding our Angolan brothers. But we must tell the Yankees to bear in mind that we are a Latin-American nation and a Latin-African nation as well (*prolonged applause*).

African blood flows freely through our veins (*applause*). Many of our ancestors came as slaves from Africa to this land. As slaves they struggled quite a great deal. They fought as members of the Liberating Army of Cuba. We're brothers and sisters of the people of Africa and we are ready to fight on their behalf! (*applause*).

Racial discrimination existed in our country. Is there anyone who doesn't know this, who doesn't remember it? Many public parks had separate walks for blacks and for whites. Is there anyone who doesn't recall that African descendants were barred from many places, from recreation centres and schools? Is there anyone who has forgotten that racial discrimination was prevalent in all aspects of work and study? And, today, who are the representatives, the symbols of the most hateful and inhuman form of racial discrimination? The South African fascists and racists. And Yankee imperialism, without scruples of any kind, has launched South African mercenary troops in an attempt to crush Angola's independence, and is now outraged by our help to Angola, our support for Africa and our defence of Africa. In keeping with the duties rooted in our principles, our ideology, our convictions and our very own blood, we shall defend Angola and Africa! (*applause and shouts of 'Cuba, Angola, united they will win!'*). And when we say defend, we mean it in the strict sense of the word.

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And when we say struggle, we mean it, also in the strict sense of the word (*applause*).

Let the South African racists and the Yankee imperialists be warned. We are part of the world revolutionary movement, and in Africa's struggle against racists and imperialists, we'll stand, without any hesitation, side by side with the peoples of Africa (*applause*).

Only cynics would dare to condemn our support for Angola while marching upon that heroic people shoulder to shoulder with South African fascists: South Africa, a region where three million whites oppress 14 million blacks, wants to impose its policy on Rhodesia, as it is doing, and on the rest of black Africa. But Black Africa will not stand for it, will not tolerate it. Imperialists and reactionaries underestimate the peoples; mercenaries are in the habit of doing as they please, of marching in with their tanks and cannon to overwhelm defenceless people. They've already tried it here in Giron, and that's just what they are trying to do in Angola. But Angolans are not defenceless! (*applause*).

And Ford is complaining. Ford is hurling threats. Not really threats. He is just saying that the hypothetical and abstract possibilities of improving relations will be cancelled. Ford should instead apologise to the revolutionary government of Cuba for the scores of assassination attempts prepared by the CIA for many years against various leaders of the revolution (*applause*). The government of Cuba has the right to expect explanations from the imperialist government of the United States and to receive apologies for the horrendous and macabre assassination attempts plotted against leaders of the Cuban revolution, attesting to their degree of civilisation, or rather their degree of barbarity, and showing their true colours as criminals. They have put technology and science at the service of murder. And for years on end, in an unscrupulous, foul and indecent manner, that government has dedicated itself to planning the assassination of revolutionary Cuban leaders.

What we want from Ford is not the cancellation of his hypothetical hopes or possibilities for an improvement of relations with Cuba, but apologies for the shameful, hateful and disgraceful crimes which the government of the United States prepared against leaders of the Cuban revolution (*applause*).

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J. David Edelstein and Malcolm Warner

Allen & Unwin, 378 pp, £14.50

HERE IS A SERIOUS attempt to examine some of the problems concerning the democracy in trade unions today. It is, as the title suggests, a comparative study of 51 American and 31 British trade unions.

As the major concern of the authors is the effectiveness of opposition, rather than all aspects of democracy, and being aware that dictatorship at the pinnacle of power is the greatest danger, they concentrate to a large degree on the effectiveness of opposition for the highest national offices in those unions they investigated.

However, they state that formal organisation is susceptible to planned change in a more democratic direction. They therefore argue rightly, to a degree, that the formal structure, and how much democracy it now permits and is likely to allow to develop, is of major importance.

While all this is undeniably true, the authors admit that trade union democrats may find that the emphasis on formal organisation is too far removed from the day-to-day workshop struggles. This is much more than a matter of personal prejudice. The resistance of the employer to organised workers is, in itself, a negation of democracy and often considerably hinders workers' rights to participate fully in union activities—a matter hardly touched on by the writers.

The two chapters on Organisation and Opposition in the US and Britain are extremely theoretical and the weighting given to some of the factors highly questionable. However, they must be read if the reader is to understand how the writers evaluate the effectiveness of formal trade union democracy.

Apart from the general study of 82 trade unions, there are a number of 'in depth' case studies of trade unions, among them the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers, of which I am a member. This allowed me to evaluate some of the theories of Edelstein and Warner against first-hand knowledge.

Frankly, I found some of what they had to say disturbing. One of their measurements of democracy is whether incumbent national officials have been either defeated or closely challenged in an election. Such a measurement is of course unrealistic. When the very forces of democracy are under attack, then those officials who support democracy become the first targets of vested interests. The recent character assassination by the press and electoral defeat of officials who support democracy can only be explained in these terms.

The authors' conception that democracy can be measured by the percentage of votes cast in an election leaves much to be questioned. They welcome the postal ballot without recognising that this gives undemocratic forces the opportunity to influence the outcome of elections. They correctly acclaim the right of a candidate to write an uncensored election address, but they fail to recognise that, under the postal ballot system, many members never see these but are left to evaluate candidates from biased press reporting and the activities of right-wing clandestine bodies.

Their support for the postal ballot derives from an evaluation of a 'fall-off' of branch life. They point to this being accelerated by the check-off and paid collector system. They fail to

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recognise that the introduction of these systems was inspired by those who have little faith in real democracy, with its resultant involvement and participation of the rank and file membership.

In fairness to Edelstein and Warner, this book was completed before press interference in union elections had reached its present stage. For this reason, they must now speak out against such undemocratic processes; their obvious desire to obtain maximum rank and file activity will otherwise be regarded with some cynicism. To quote them: 'Democracy is a fragile plant requiring favourable conditions to bloom.' Gross interference from the supporters of multinational capitalism poisons the very roots of that self-same blossoming,

For all its shortcomings, this is a book which should be read by those interested in trade union democracy. The irony is that such is the nature of capitalism that those whom it concerns most—the rank and file trade unionists —will be denied the right to read it at the ridiculous price of £14.50 unless they can persuade their library to obtain a copy.

KEN BRETT

Marxism and the Theory of Human Personality
Lucien Sève
Lawrence & Wishart, 60 pp, £1.50

DIALECTICAL MATERIALISTS have, on the whole, been somewhat wary of heavy involvement in psychology. There is no extensive formulation of attitudes in this particular branch of science with a specially Marxist flavour. This little book by Sève, who was elected to the Central Committee of the French Communist Party in 1961, does little more than repeat some of the relevant quotations from the Marxist classics and ask some pertinent questions. The approach is essentially that of a philosopher rather than of a working psychologist. The author has also written an introduction to Leninism and a text on contemporary French philosophy. The book reviewed here was originally published in French in 1968.

The treatment is a little disappointing, largely because of the brevity of the text. To give the subject the attention it deserves it might be helpful to cast some contemporary psychologist such as Eysenck or authority such as Jensen in the role of Dühring. But this would require much more space and might be done more effectively by a practising psychologist. Whilst most of the points made by Sève are acceptable as a starting point, there are some which are questionable and invite further discussion. He refers to Politzer's effort as remaining, 'despite its fundamental incompleteness, an outstanding example of the Marxist contribution towards this process' (i.e. the finding of a 'true science of concrete individuality').

A major problem for psychology is to orientate itself between a scientific basis in biology and related sciences, on the one hand, and to define its role in sociology on the other. It is all too easy to use individual psychological interpretations to belittle the role of economics and the objective laws of history. Sève sets out this task of the definition, in scientific terms, of the 'concept of man' for Marxism. Whilst this general notion is unexceptionable, his statement that it should give the 'biological base the correct role of a genetic point of departure . . .' needs clarification if it is not to invite attack. If the term 'genetic' simply relates to genesis it is not so objectionable, but if 'genetic' implies that which is given by heredity then it is quite unacceptable. The biology of the individual is a living process which continues till death. Nature is changed

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by nurture, and there is uninterrupted interaction. The only point of departure is conception, and even at that time there is active environmental involvement. It is important for Marxists to demonstrate the role of the social environment as it impinges subtly on our biological nature; but it is wrong to neglect the grosser impacts of emotional deprivation, undernutrition, illegitimacy and a combination of social adversity before and after birth.

BRIAN KIRMAN

Robespierre
George Rudé
Collins, 254 pp, £4.95

NONE OF THE LEADING figures of that stupendous event, the French revolution, has escaped vilification, calumny and obloquy. And no one has been more violently characterised than Robespierre: there is no end to the grotesquerie of personality with which he has been pilloried by the earlier historians. Carlyle, not the most unsympathetic or malevolent, called him 'sea-green incorruptible', and others pictured him as a monster, a bloodthirsty tyrant, a drinker of blood, 'the most hypocritical, cowardly and ferocious monster that has appeared on the world's stage to the misfortune of humanity', endowed with almost every vice and weakness.

Rudé takes us through the multitude of histories, biographies and critical assessments of Robespierre made first by contemporaries, and then by the great series of French, European and American historians, through the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, to show how this early image changed, as the pattern and the conflicts of the French revolution itself unfolded themselves.

This volume contains in some forty pages a summary of Robespierre's life from his birth in Artois in northern France to his execution in May 1794. In these 36 years, his training and professional activities as a lawyer, the influence on him of the ideas of Montesquieu and Rousseau, his participation in the affairs of his town, his championing of the poor there, led to his election in May 1789 as one of the eight deputies sent from Artois to represent the commons in the fateful Estates-General. And thereafter his life is inseparable from the revolution: he made 68 speeches in the first year of the meeting of the Estates; he became one of the leaders of the Jacobins and one of the members of the Committee of Public Safety, which in fact acted as an executive committee for the revolution.

The humanitarian, political and social ideals of Robespierre, his incorruptibility (with which even his enemies credited him), his actions, and the known divergences between his abstract professions of principle at different times, and the positions he took up at crucial moments in the revolution are here examined objectively.

Rudé notes that Marx saw 'that Robespierre and the Jacobins had a particular and necessary role to play in that they used the Terror to harness the nation to the needs of a revolutionary war; but once the danger from invasion was over they were inevitably cast aside . . .' (p 77). Lenin in 1917, Rudé tells us, saw the 'revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the Year II as a precursor and model for the one he was preparing to establish himself.' He quotes Lenin as saying: 'The bourgeois historians see in Jacobinism a *downfall*. The proletarian historians regard Jacobinism as the greatest expression of an oppressed class in the struggle for liberation. The Jacobins gave France the best models of a democratic revolution; they repelled in exemplary fashion the coalition

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of monarchs formed against the republic. . . . It is natural for the bourgeoisie to hate Jacobinism. It is natural for the petty bourgeoisie to fear it. The class-conscious workers and toilers have faith in the transfer of power to the revolutionary oppressed class, for *that* is the essence of Jacobinism. . . .'

Robespierre's ideas on war, religion, education, capital punishment, the Terror, his relations with Danton and Hébert, especially, too, his attitude towards the people and to the *sans-culottes*, are all here examined. Not in abstraction, but in relation to the principled positions he was compelled to take up in the vicissitudes of the revolutionary war, with enemies abroad and intriguers and traitors at home, his ideas are closely scrutinised and seen to be justified by the events which they responded to.

Rudé ends his account with the summing up: 'The French revolution was one of the great landmarks in modern history. No other single event did so much to destroy the aristocratic society and absolutist institutions of old Europe, and to lay the groundwork for the new societies—both bourgeois and socialist—that on every continent have risen from their ashes since. To this transformation Robespierre made a signal contribution, not only as the revolution's outstanding leader at every stage of its most vigorous and creative years, but also as the first great champion of democracy and the people's rights. And this, essentially, is what established his claim to greatness.'

BEN AINLEY

Competition Announcement
Three to win RPD books

A regular reader has written to say that he is 'sure that many of us who appreciate the value of *Labour Monthly* would like to see its readership extended. Why not a competition amongst the readers to see who can get the largest number of subscriptions?'

An unusual suggestion perhaps, but a good one too. The labour movement is involved in more political thinking and discussion than for many a long day, and *Labour Monthly*—the magazine of left unity—is invaluable to anyone taking part. Yet many are not familiar with it or have only occasionally seen an issue, and may not be in touch with any one who could supply it each month.

Labour Monthly is therefore launching an emulation campaign to obtain new subscriptions as one way of introducing the journal to new readers. An autographed copy of one of R. Palme Dutt's books will be given for the three highest numbers of new subscriptions.

Readers wishing to take up this challenge will be sent full particulars on application to *Labour Monthly*, 134 Ballards Lane, London, N3 2PD.

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WITH a donation a few months ago from Liverpool we had a note to say: 'I have been reading *LM* for two years, and find it an excellent political journal. I was saddened to hear of RPD's death, as it was his writing on world-wide problems, especially of relations between the US and USSR, which helped to clarify my own thoughts. By his writings he has immortalised himself.'

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These notes by old and new readers from home and abroad say much that all would echo. With our present small staff (even if we could afford the postage), regrettably we cannot always reply individually. We hope this will not discourage you—I am purposely addressing you, the reader of these lines, directly now—from giving us your thoughts on the journal. We welcome letters and suggestions. And we do make use of them, as you will see, for example, in our competition introduced on page 143. The contact we have always maintained with our readers is necessary to 'the life of *LM*'.

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